

HB561/SB17

UNFAVORABLE

To the Honorable Delegates of the House Judiciary Committee:

While providing basic training for judges to properly adjudicate cases that involve DV and child abuse is essential, the design and implementation of HB561/SB17 is problematic for several reasons. The preeminent problem with this bill is contained in its first line. The bill reads that

20 (A) THE MARYLAND JUDICIARY, IN CONSULTATION WITH DOMESTIC 21 VIOLENCE AND CHILD ABUSE ORGANIZATIONS, SHALL.

It is abundantly clear that the “domestic violence organizations” that will design and implement the training are the same groups that controlled the Maryland’s Workgroup to Study Child Custody Court Proceedings Involving Child Abuse or Domestic Violence Allegations. This will have catastrophic results for MD children and their families.

Senator Robert Cassilly eloquently expressed at the hearing on SB17 that SB17 represents the efforts of a particularly biased group of individuals and that the training of the judicial branch needs to remain neutral of such agendas. This bill was designed and will be implemented by a group of activists with a social agenda that includes eliminating parental alienation at all costs. This agenda is built upon a belief system that fathers are not necessary and that shared parenting is a moot issue. In the book [Challenging Parental Alienation](#) by Jean Mercer (the resent magnum opus of the parental alienation critics), Joan Meier openly writes and talks about this. Another author in the book outrageously states on page 205 that “**parental alienation ideology reinforces the harmful myths that... fathers who contest custody do so out of paternal affection and concern**”.

This is not science; rather, it is a very distorted and gender biased belief system. This bill aims to indoctrinate judges in this belief system. They also want to prevent cases from even getting to the evaluators and judges in the first place by self-declaring parental alienation as “junk science” and by implementing controversial and extremely low standards for the admission of DV claims that automatically exclude parental alienation from consideration. This lowering of the bar for the admission of abuse claims is a second major flaw with this bill.

This bill will result in innocent people being scarred for life by false abuse allegations and in children suffering the significant emotional child abuse of parental alienation. Even if the parental alienation text is removed from the bill as was done in SB17, the intended result of this clause will nevertheless be reflected in the training. I urge you to give this bill an unfavorable report. It is not salvageable since it was not based on science but by a group of people who deny the considerable science of shared parenting and parental alienation.

I invite you to convene a panel of parental alienation, shared parenting, and DV experts who do not have a gender bias to help design balanced and effective bills for dealing with the areas in the current system that need improvement including the proper identification of and the

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response to DV and parental alienation based on genuine peer reviewed research and scientific standards. I am acquainted with many of the leaders in the parental alienation field and I would be happy to provide you with their contact information and/or to answer any questions that you have you have about parental alienation. Thank you for your consideration of this vital matter.

Respectfully yours,

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